

logrado es el análisis de *En el último azul* (1977), obra que desenmascara los mecanismos del discurso histórico oficial sobre los actos de fe de 1691 en Mallorca.

En las páginas dedicadas a la primera novela de Juan Manuel de Prada, la aproximación histórica es muy otra, pues abarca desde los primeros años del reinado de Alfonso XII a la Guerra Civil. El análisis se lleva a cabo al socaire de personajes reales (Valle-Inclán, Dalí o José Antonio, sobre todo) y ficticios, estos últimos poco fiables, menos debido a la intertextualidad corrompida o al envilecimiento de las técnicas narrativas de escritores consagrados (Valle-Inclán, Baroja, Gómez de la Serna, sobre todo) que a la práctica de la *execratio* de la novela pornográfica y la literatura filofascista. Objeto de análisis del capítulo sexto es *El abrecartas* (2006), la espléndida novela de Vicente Molina Foix galardonada con el Premio nacional de Narrativa de 2007. Una obra que pulsa muchos acordes, desde la elegía a la comicidad patética, de la intrahistoria al panfleto, de la imitación estilística a modo de homenaje al plagio «ejemplar», del discurso sobre la relevancia y la función de los artistas en la sociedad española durante la República a la denuncia de los crímenes de la primera posguerra, de la rememoración histórica a la necesidad de restituirla. El extenso capítulo que Ramón García dedica a la obra tiene, amén del mérito de ser el primer análisis detenido y profundo de la novela, la espontaneidad y el atrevimiento de quien aborda la exégesis a sabiendas de que aún no existen estudios que sirvan de apoyo. Los resultados son muy notables, y precisos los juicios de valor y los rastreos de pistas, hipotextos e intertextualidades, a veces sorprendentes y con frecuencia reveladores.

En las conclusiones repasa el autor aspectos teóricos y valora opiniones autorizadas que confirman los resultados de su investigación. Una monografía, en verdad, necesaria.

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Daniela Flesler. *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP. 2008. 246 pp.

Daniela Flesler's well researched book chronicles Spanish reactions to Moroccan immigration through an analytical reading of contemporary narratives. These reactions are articulated in relationship to the Spanish government's attempts to define its «Europeaness» locally and transnationally. Flesler explains that the term Moor (Morisco), originating with the North African Muslim conquerors in 711, carries a negative connotation. The present-day references to historical inva-

sion impacts the perception Spaniards develop toward Moroccans who constitute the second largest group of immigrants in the country, after Ecuadoreans.

Flesler convincingly argues that the «return of the Moors» has urged Spaniards «to confront old ghosts related to its national, regional, racial, and cultural identities» (195). According to the author, contemporary Moroccan immigration to the Peninsula is defined by the common ancestral histories that have shaped Spaniards' perception of «the Moors.» Unlike other immigrant groups, especially immigrants from Latin America, Muslims are constructed as «Others» unable to embrace the values of modern Europe. In this context, the ghosts of the past continue to haunt the cultural imaginary of the nation that is still striving to reinvent its European identity. The author also underlines the ambivalences associated with Spaniards' attempts to place «the Moors» in a reclusive space of otherness. The boundaries remain fluid, instable and subject to permanent change.

The framing of «the Moor» as different becomes an inspirational subject for literary, cinematographic and journalistic representations. Flesler explores the cultural intricacies of many narratives that explore the dilemmas of North African immigration. She argues that most of these works reconstruct an Orientalist imagery incapable of grasping the true dynamics of intercultural negotiations between the immigrants and their hosts. The author explains how stereotypical representations of otherness are constructed across binary lines that posit Spaniards' modernity and Europeaness and the Moors rejection of secularism and modern values. The trope of cultural differences is instrumental in celebrating Spain as a homogeneous cultural hub, a European nation «invaded» by illegal foreigners. The process of separation expressed through creative and ethnographic work portrays both entities as fixed identities unable to mix in a harmonious fashion. The Moors become prisoners of misconceptions that incite social confrontations and collective violence against them. In the Spanish imaginary the Moors bring up memories linked to AD711 invasion; as Flesler states «this indexical connection to the invading medieval Moor is rampant in contemporary responses to Moroccan immigration: present in social confrontations and violent collective attacks against Moroccan workers, in Spanish politician's comments, in fictional works and ethnographic testimonies, it constitutes one of the most recurrent tropes by which the significance of current Moroccan immigration is explained» (196).

The marking of difference illustrates Spaniards' fear of associating with an undesired category of immigrants that challenge the «European» dimension of the nation. The reading of the historical past from a purely nationalistic perspective places immigrants at a distance of otherness. Therefore, the construction of an imaginary Moor

emerges as an idealized entity that defies identification with either Berbers or Arabs in medieval Al-Andalous or with the Moroccan immigrants today. Flesler argues that the depiction of the Moor in films and novels focuses on the cultural impossibility of integration as a result of the Moor's religious conservatism, machismo toward women and anti-modern positions vis-à-vis the social and the cultural values of Spanish society.

According to the author, narratives such as Andrés Sorel's *Las voces del Estrecho*; Torres's *Yo, Mohamed* and Beatriz Diaz's *Todo negro ni igual: voces de emigrantes en el barrio bilbaino de San Francisco*, and others, place Moroccan immigrants in a subaltern position and frame them as voiceless entities unable to negotiate their difference. These narratives also place Moroccans at the heart of the language politics debate that rages in Spanish society. The author explores the controversies associated with the Moors' use of Catalan or Castilian in the region of Catalonia. As Flesler states, «Moroccan immigrants, in particular, as we have seen, awaken some of the most sensitive issues that Spain as a nation has had to solve: its own regional, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic internal heterogeneity, the management of its internal others, and its position of «difference» and inferiority in a more developed and modernized Europe.» (197)

Throughout the book, the author makes clear that immigration dynamics in contemporary Spain should be understood in the historical context of a society striving to redefine its identity in a modern European space. The reinvention of new parameters of cultural differentiation has urged Spaniards to embrace homogeneous modes of cultural representation of the self.

*The Return of the Moor* is an engaging scholarly work solidly grounded in post-colonial, deconstruction and psychoanalytic theory. Daniela Flesler's critical reading of some major narratives and films that focus on contemporary Moroccan immigration to the Iberian Peninsula is enlightening and informative. The author's deconstruction strategies unravel the intricacies and the difficulties associated with the reading of narratives written by Spanish individuals. She suggests other modes of readings that take into consideration the position of the voiceless Moor. An additional reading of Moroccan Arabic and French texts on immigration could have added a breadth to the understanding of the phenomenon. The book is certainly a must read for students and scholars interested in immigration in Europe in general and in Spain in particular.

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